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*The Duty of Peace amongst the Members of the
same State, Civil or Ecclesiastical, impartial-
ly laid down and recommended;*

O R,

*How a Man should behave himself, as becomes
a Christian, with respect to High and Low
Church, Whig and Tory.*

A

S E R M O N

Preached at the

Cathedral Church of *Lincoln*;

July the 7th, 1713.

By *JAMES GARDINER*, M. A.
Subdean and Canon Residentiary of that Church.

L O N D O N: *N*

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SE R M O N



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R O M. XIV. 19.

*Let us therefore follow after
the Things which make for
Peace.*

THIS excellent Advice of the Apostle, though given upon a particular Occasion, is yet so general in the Nature of it, and in the Terms in which it is expressed, that there will be no need to limit and restrain it by the Context. The Words seem to carry in them an Exhortation to *all Kinds* of Peace, and to put in Practice *every thing* that may forward *any one* of them: And if we enumerate the several Kinds and Instances of Peace, they will all appear so desirable, that an Exhortation to follow after the Things which make for them, or the proper Means to obtain and preserve them, cannot but be reasonably and pertinently applied to them all.

And *First* we may very well apply it to that they call a *Civil Peace*, a Rest from the Noise and Violence of Arms, when a Nation has Peace within its own Bowels, undisturbed by any foreign Invasion or domestick Rebellion, the Course of Justice free, and every Man enjoys his own with Safety. Or when neighbouring Nations lay down their Enmity to each other, compose their Differences, and put up their Swords, and a friendly Commerce and Intercourse is set on foot betwixt them; when the unpleasing Scenes of Blood and Slaughter are made to vanish, and all the dreadful Instruments of War beaten out into Plow-shares and Pruning-hooks. Such is the Peace, which, after a long and expensive War, is the Subject of our present Thanksgiving; and as it deserved our Industry to promote it according to our several Capacities, and the least we

could do was to pray for it, while it was unobtain'd, so now we have obtain'd it, we ought to return our most hearty Thanks to God for so desirable a Blessing.

But *Secondly*, if we apply the Apostle's Exhortation to the *Peace of the Church*, it cannot but appear to be very much our Interest as well as Duty to *follow after the things which make for such a Peace*. Is it not a Blessing worthy the Esteem and Care of all good Men to see the Gospel triumph in Security, the Storms of Persecution all blown over, and no Clouds a gathering which may threaten new ones? Should it not be the Joy of every pious Heart, when the Profession of our Faith and the Power of Godliness may both be advanced without Obstruction? When we may be zealous and fervent in our Religion not only at a cheaper Rate than Martyrdom, but under the Encouragement and Protection of the Civil Government, as well as the Obligation and Promises of the Divine Law? When needless Scruples, fierce Contentions, uncharitable Heats in Matters of Religion, and mischievous Schisms and Separations, being laid aside, the Church has Rest from all its Enemies, and the Unity of the Spirit and the Bond of Peace at once cement it and adorn it?

Or *Thirdly* apply this to our *Peace with God*, and the well-grounded Repose and Settlement of a Good-Conscience with respect to its present Conduct by the Laws of our Religion, and to its future Hopes of the Reward they promise, when the Burden of Sin which galls the Conscience is removed; our Pardons assured to us by a due and just Application, *the Spirit of God bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God*; and Joy in the Holy Ghost possesses and inspires a serene and quiet Mind, the Exhortation must needs be very pertinent, that we should follow after the Things which make for such a Peace.

All these are Instances well worth our Pursuit and Desires, but there is yet another Kind of Peace to which this Exhortation is full as suitable as (or rather more so than) to any of the former, *viz. a Peace of mutual Harmony and Concord amongst the Members of the same State Civil or Ecclesiastical*, a Peace opposed to Faction, to uncharitable Censures, and unnatural Heats, and to giddy and ill-grounded Differences. It is an Union of Hearts and Affections, the Love of a Man, and the Charity of a Christian. To this I shall restrain my Thoughts in the following Discourse, and the Subject cannot be unreasonable upon the present Occasion, since our most excellent Queen, when she declared to her Parliament that she had obtain'd for us a *Peace Abroad*, was pleas'd at the same Time with great Concern and Earnest-

ness

nels to recommend to us *Peace at Home*. Thus *Joseph* when he dismiss'd his Brethren, did it with this prudent and affectionate Caution, *See that ye fall not out by the way*; the same our Gen. 45. 24. blessed Saviour gave to his Disciples, *Have Peace one with another*; and St. Paul to the Thessalonians, *Be at Peace among yourselves*. I am sorry to say that our own Divisions have rendered such Mark 9. 50. 1 Thess. 5. Advice both from the Throne and from the Pulpit so very reasonable and necessary. But that it is so, the Factions and Parties which prevail amongst us are an Evidence too notorious to be withstood, and I pray God they may not prove an Evil too obstinate and inveterate to admit a Cure. Parties there are (but whether to denominate them from Church or State I know not, for there is a Mixture both of Religion and Politicks in the Dispute) kept up by ill-designing Men to serve their Ends, and the Dissention is risen to a most unnatural Height, inflamed by those wicked Distinctions of High and Low-Church, Whig and Tory, which are of such an uncertain Signification, that one knows not what to make of them, but that they gratifie the Spleen of every Body to the Man he likes not, an Argument of greater Passion than Understanding. To this mischievous Temper, I would oppose the Exhortation of the Apostle in my Text, that laying aside those Party-Quarrels and Distinctions, we should live in perfect good Agreement with each other, and follow after the Things which make for Peace.

Let us therefore consider,

I. What Things they are which do in an eminent manner make for Peace, and would, if follow'd after, heal the Divisions which are amongst us.

II. The Diligence which is to be used in our Application to these Means, and what those Difficulties are which render it necessary.

III. The Motives which recommend the Practice of this Duty of following after the Things which make for Peace.

Our first Enquiry must be

I. What Things they are which do in an eminent manner make for Peace, and would, if follow'd after, heal the Divisions which are amongst us.

(1.) The

(1.) The first of those Things which make for Peace is *Consensus of Opinion, or Harmony in Judgment*. And this, were it entirely practicable, would certainly be the *most effectual Expedient* for the Peace of Societies: For whence comes it that such as differ in their Opinion (tho' the Points in question be really of little Moment) are so warm and bitter against each other; and on the contrary, each of these adheres so firmly to those who think the same way with themselves, and cry them up at all Adventures; but that their Judgments and Persuasions move their Affections, and make them to love or hate not only the *Opinions* of such as agree or disagree with them, but the *Persons* also for the Opinion's sake? And therefore it follows not unfairly in that Exhortation to the *Corinthians*, *Be of one Mind, live in Peace*. The most effectual Means for living in Peace, is to be of one Mind and Opinion; or to be perfectly joined together in the same Mind and in the same Judgment; as the Apostle in another place beseeches them. But considering the great Variety there is in the Capacities or Understandings of Men, and in the Opportunities of *knowing*, and in other Circumstances that may promote or hinder the judging rightly of Things; and yet that every Man must of Necessity form his Judgment according to his own Capacity and Understanding, and to the best Information he can get; it is impossible (strictly speaking) that all Men should be of *one Mind*, should have the same Ideas, and pass exactly the same Judgment. And therefore the Meaning of those Exhortations, and of what I have by their Authority been recommending, cannot be that we are obliged to be of every other Man's Opinion, for that were utterly impracticable, would bind us to an absurd Belief of Contraries, and lead us into the very thing St. Paul has elsewhere caution'd us against, *the being like Children carried about with every Wind of Doctrine*. But the true Meaning is, that we should agree in the same Sentiments with others *as far as we can, with due regard to Truth*. For Truth is single and but one, and when we faithfully endeavour after Truth, we endeavour to be of the same Mind, not the same Mind indeed that every one is of, but the same Mind that every one should be of: And could we all attain to the real Truth of Things, we should all be of the same Opinion. What then is it that a wise and a good Man has to do, in Pursuit of this first Means of Peace? He finds Men of different Sentiments, and broken into Factions to maintain them; each Party hot and violent for their own, embittered against the opposite Opinion, and tearing Truth to pieces in an unnatural Contention for her; each Side alike pretending to great Importance in the Dispute, great Impartiality in their Reasonings, and a steady Honesty in their Designs;

2 Cor. 13.
11.

1 Cor. 1. 10.

Eph. 4. 14.

signs: How then shall he behave himself to answer the Demands of Peace and Christianity with regard to them? Why, I take it, must be his Method; he must subscribe to *neither* Party in the Gross: For both of them may deceive, and either of them may be deceiv'd by false Representations, all Sides may be too hasty in mutual Suspicions, and impose upon themselves false Conclusions. He must therefore give into neither of them as a Party, nor take any thing barely upon their Words, but separately from the several Passions and Interests of either take a strict, a careful, and an unbiass'd Enquiry into the *truth* of their Pretensions both in Fact and Argument, aiming to find out the true State of Things, and form a rational Judgment accordingly thereupon. Where he finds Reason to believe either of them in the right, he must readily come into them so far, but no farther; for where he thinks either of them to be wrong (as all who are thorough-Party-men usually are in something or other) he must by no means agree with them, but where it will be born with remonstrate and protest against it, or where it will not, reserve the Freedom of his Judgment to his own Breast. It is indeed an hard thing to be thus perfectly upon the Indifferent where Parties are courting us on every Side, and almost every Body we converse with is engaged to one or other of them. Some Provision therefore must be made for Peace by other Expedients, in case Men cannot preserve their Inclinations so severely impartial and unbiass'd, but that the Company they keep (by plausible Reasonings or importunate Clamours) should a little impose upon them; or in case that upon a cool Enquiry after Truth, the Reason and Justice of Things do influence their Judgments to go along with the one, rather than the other Party. In Consideration of this, propose,

(2.) That which Party soever has the Advantage in our Sentiments and Affections, *we must not unreasonably give into the value or Commendation of those on our own Side.* We must not make it our Business, as too many do, to cry up, without a due and strict regard to Truth, the *Character* and *Merits* of great Men for whom we have imbibed a particular Veneration, nor say every thing that is *said or written* in their Praise, or Vindication. For this tends only to exasperate those who have a different Opinion of them, and sometimes to expose our own weakness when we deny those Faults in them which they really have, and extravagantly extol them to a Perfection more than Human. A compass of Time will probably give Light to Truth, and then when the Blomishes of the Man we were so fond of come to be impartially examined, and undeniably visible,

ble, 'twill be enough to make us blush that we have been so profuse and inconsiderate in our Admiration of him. He therefore who would behave himself discreetly and peaceably must not take all for Gospel which is said in favour of the Leaders of his own Party, or of any Body else they recommend. He must consider coolly of Mens Characters, and acknowledge what appears to have been indeed an Error in the best and greatest Men of his own Opinion. Much less must he excuse their Vices, by either wilfully denying and hiding, or obstinately justifying what is really and evidently a Fault in them. For this is not only highly provoking, but such a wicked Partiality attends to the confounding of all Distinctions of Virtue and Vice, of Good and Evil; nay it is so very unreasonable, that this Caution might be thought unnecessary, if daily Experience was not an Argument to the contrary, that it is the common Practice of all who are deeply engaged in a Party. And,

- (3.) As we must not unreasonably and without regard to Truth give into the Value and Commendation of those of our own Party, so neither must we *rashly condemn and censure* the other Side. We must say nothing that will bear hard upon them and judge nothing uncharitably of them. None but a bad Cause can need ill Language to defend it: For there indeed what wants in Force of Argument, may require to be made up in Passion and ill-natured Reflections, to bully an Adversary or put him out of Countenance: but if Truth be really on our Side, (as to be sure we think it is,) it will need no more than its own native Force to maintain it. Even the best and strongest Arguments are mightily impair'd in their Strength by those feverish Heats that are apt to inflame them in the Delivery; while a cool and sober Reason, the *Meekness of Wisdom* (as St. James calls it) recommends the Truth and its Defender, makes way to the Heart of those we talk with in spite of all the Difference in Judgment, takes off the grating Harshness of Opposition, and by a secret sympathetick Power is apt to produce a Temper like it self, and to breath a modest Coolness into the Mind of an Adversary, however otherwise and at other Times inflamed and impetuous. But beside this Guard upon our outward Behaviour, 'tis necessary to put our inward Thoughts under the same Discipline, and
- Jam. 3. 13. there indeed it must begin; *for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* We must not judge any more than talk uncharitably. We ought not, without great Occasion, undeniable Proofs, or strong and apparent Probabilities from some Overt-Act, to suspect Men of ill Design, who solemnly declare they have none; for he that will pass Sentence at a venture on all who differ from him as Enemies to the Church or the State, and this for no better
- Matt. 12, 14.

better Reason than that they don't agree with him in the same Methods of preserving either, is certainly an Enemy to Peace, what Zeal soever he may pretend for *his Country*. A wise and charitable Christian therefore will by no Means censure any Body as of a different Party. He will hope that all Men mean well, till by their Actions they notoriously shew the contrary. He will not be forward to suspect Men of base and unworthy Designs which they protest against, till he has much better Evidence to convict them upon than the mutual (and very oft unreasonable) Jealousies of a factious and odious Distinction. He thinks, it may be, that they go into wrong Measures, are mistaken in their Management, and that what they propose for the Good, may prove to the *Disservice* of the Publick; but all this while he is not willing to think it a *design'd Mistake* in them, nor is he positively sure but *they* may be in the right and *he* mistaken. No Man can say that he and his Party are infallible, that they have ingrossed all the Sense and Policy and Foresight and Honesty in the World. We are all of us liable to Errors, more or fewer, and no one can foresee the Event of all things. The good Man therefore considers that in Christian Modesty he ought rather to suspect his own Understanding, than to condemn and censure that of others. He knows that it is God's Prerogative to judge; and will not usurp that Office, which an infinite unerring Knowledge is only fit for, and Almighty Justice has the only Right to execute. He considers, that suppose another is not of his Opinion, yet no Man can be of what Judgment he pleases; he may assemble his Thoughts and play the Hypocrite perhaps, but his Will cannot have that Empire and Dominion over his Understanding as to move it absolutely to *any Thing* or *any Belief*; and all these Considerations will incline him to the most equitable and favourable Thoughts of an opposite Party that their Declarations and Actions charitably compared together will admit of. But be the Matter as it will, yet,

(4.) Upon supposition that the Bias leads us against that Party, which ever it is, that seems to be then favoured or kept in Countenance by the Administration, I say, *especially* in this Case, let me recommend a *peaceable Silence*, not speaking evil of Dignities, reviling the Ministry, or cursing the Rulers of our People. We are not to rail at the Administration, to represent them either as fools or Knaves, and run from one Company to another with our malicious Remarks upon every Step they take; for what is this but an Over-Act of Sedition? What Government can be safe and easie in the midst of such dangerous Practices, which industriously propagate Discontent, and probably must end in Conspiracies, Treason, and civil War? No Christian Prin-

ciples, I am sure, can justify this petulant Humour; they teach
 us quite another Conduct. The Apostle's Rule is, that we should
not speak evil of no man; and much less, surely, of our Governors.
 And yet the Generality of Men take as little Notice of this as if
 there was no such Precept in their Bible, or as if they valued

Jam. i. 26. *not whether there is no. St. James has told us, if any man among you seem to be religious and bridleth not his Tongue, this man's Religion is vain.* And indeed not only his Religion but his Politics are vain too: For Affairs may not always look with a promising Aspect, nor succeed well, when yet the Ministers may be neither corrupt, nor incapable. Why should not they, who have been train'd up to the Business of the State, see as far into the probable Consequences of Things as we do? And why, since they are Men of Fortunes, and have something considerable to lose in the common Ruin, be as desirous to preserve their Country as we are? If at any time it happen otherwise, that such as are employ'd in the Administration are either really imprudent or drive to their own Advantage, contrary to the publick Good, yet, I pray, will not this be visible without our interposing? Must the whole Nation be irrecoverably blind, and inevitably ruin'd, except we open their Eyes and proclaim their Danger? A wise and good Man, knowing that this is neither a legal nor a likely Method for redressing of such Grievances, will leave the Male-Administration of corrupt or careless Ministers to be enquired into regularly, by those who have the proper Inspection of them. If therefore he find himself perswaded that Things go not so right as he could wish for the Interest of his Country, it is not every Body shall know his Thoughts; he will look upon a modest Reservedness and Tenderness in talking of them to be the Duty of every private Christian, he will upon all Occasions (where there is a Necessity of saying any thing) rather soften than exasperate Matters, put the most favourable Construction upon things that they will bear, and do what he can to check the factious Heat of such as are less considerate, and take it for greater Glory, as well as an honest Part, to allay the Discontents of People than to inflame them.

And thus I have, in four Particulars, endeavour'd to lay before you all the Things I could think of, which make for Peace; but if your own Thoughts suggest to you any more, it is your Duty to follow after them; for the Words of my Text are general and will include them all.

II. Let us next consider the Diligence which is to be used in our Application to these Means, and what those Difficulties are which make it necessary. Our Text requires us to follow after, which implies

applies some Difficulty in attaining *the things which make Peace*; they lie before us and are not easily to be overtaken; we must pursue them with a resolute Constancy, an unwearied Labour, with a deep Sense of the Value and Importance of them, and with an Earnestness of Mind proportionable thereunto. Indeed our whole Christian Course, and every Part of it, is attended with Difficulties; our Appetites and Passions interfere, the Corruptions of humane Nature clog us, and be they what they will, there is always somewhat in the way to embarrass and perplex the Practice of it; which makes it absolutely needful to exert our Strength and Courage, to the utmost, to perform it steadily. Hence it is that our Saviour warns us that we should *strive to enter in at the strait gate*. And *Ln. c 13. 24. Paul, so run that ye may obtain*. All Vertue is the Reward *1 Cor. 9. 24* of Diligence, the Purchase of an infinite Care and Circumspection. A Prize it is, well worthy the Solitude of great and generous Minds; a pleasant Land, and much to be desired; but the Way to it is rough and tedious, and the Opposition great. Therefore who will in earnest set himself to the attaining it, must gird up the Loins of his Mind, and put on the whole Armour of God; keep up his Spirits and Endeavours to the end that he may not only *come up with the Virtue he is in Pursuit of*, but *secure the Profession and hold fast his Integrity*. What has been said of Christian Virtues in general, is particularly the case of this peaceable Spirit, to which I am here exhorting; therefore the Apostle presses it upon us with a double Emphasis. *If it be possible* (says he) *as much as lyeth in you live Peaceably with all men*. *Rom. 12. 18.* Peace is a most beautiful and valuable Possession, but not to be had with vain, transient, and uncertain Efforts. 'Tis an Affair of too much Difficulty, as well as Excellency, to be put off thus. It must be the constant, uniform, and steady Labour of our Lives; all Opportunities to be embraced that may promote it, and our whole Conversation from first to last, must be upon the Guard to preserve it. We enquire now what it is that renders all this Pains and Diligence about it necessary, what those Obstructions are which usually hinder Men in the Pursuit of the Things which we seek for Peace, and give the secret Bias to Faction and Party both in our selves and others.

1.) The first I shall take notice of is *Self-Interest*. I believe we will not be uncharitable to affirm that the leading Men of the Parties have (generally speaking) some private End of their own to serve by our Divisions. Let the Pretence made use of to amuse us be what it will, the Reason is Preferment; they would have the Direction of Affairs, that they may In-

gross the Posts of Honour and Places of Profit to themselves. And that the Voice of the Nation may favour them in their Aims, their Business is to raise a Party, and make it as violent for them as they can, by artful and popular Suggestions. The Spring of all is but their own ambitious Appetite of Power and Wealth and Honour; while others, who are taught to admire them as the only Patriots or true Churchmen, are indeed no more than Tools to the Pride and Faction of Great Men. Now though the Bulk or Body of each Party cannot hope to get into any considerable Place by such Divisions, yet let them search their own Hearts *sincerely*, and perhaps the most of them will find this selfish Principle (in some degree or other) at the Bottom. *Some* would have their Friends at the Helm, that they may hope for the Favour and Countenance of the *Court* upon Occasion. *Others*, it's likely, have Dependancies upon, Obligations to, or Expectations from *Great Men*, who often require from their Creatures an entire Submission of their Opinions, and to go along with them as far as they think fit in a Party: And *others* perhaps expect Advantage from the *Country*, especially if they are of that Side which happens to have the Majority of Voices in that part of the Kingdom where they live. For to such impertinent Distraction are we arrived, that there is scarce a petty Office in any Parish to be disposed of, but it is made a Party-Cause; and in all Elections of greater Moment Men wholly build their Hopes and Pretences upon the Merits and Strength of Whig or Tory, and succeed accordingly. The Views of Self-Interest are indeed so many that it is impossible to recount them; so prevailing, that there are few who are not secretly too much govern'd by them; and yet so ungenerous and base, that most Men are ashamed to own them, and unwilling to believe themselves concern'd in them. But such however is the Case unquestionably with regard to the Parties that divide us; and so long as Men of such a Principle can find their own private Account in inflaming the publick Divisions, or by their Heat and Clamours and Activity render themselves so serviceable to their Party as to be thought worth Notice and Encouragement, it will be an hard Matter to persuade them to so much Self-denial as to *follow after the things which make for Peace*. Another Obstacle to which is

(2.) *Prejudice*; and this may be of several Sorts, proceeding either from Education, Conversation, Love, or Hatred. *Some*, who are too generous to be led by little Interests into a Faction, do yet insensibly engage in it by the meer force of *Educ-*
ation

casion; they have heard their Parents and Tutors talking all along in a particular Strain, extolling one Side, and railing at the other; and the Reverence they have for these, and the having been brought up under continual Lectures of this kind from their very Infancy, chains down their Inclinations to that Party which ever it is; this Custom becomes a second Nature to them, and 'tis perhaps the hardest thing in the World to strip ones self of such a Prejudice. Much like it is that which we are apt to imbibe from the *Company we keep*; when our whole Set of Friends, for whom we have the greatest Esteem, and the most frequent Converse with, do happen to be Party-Men of the one or the other Side, and their particular Set of Notions inculcated upon us by every Day's Conversation, it is a mighty Bias, and leads us unawares to be as warm and positive for the same as they are. Others perhaps are led aside by the Veneration they have for some great Man in their Neighbourhood; the good Opinion they have of him is enough to recommend his Sentiments, and put them upon distinguishing themselves accordingly. And as a blind *Affection* for the Persons of Men may impose upon their Judgments in favour of on Side, so the *Dislike* of some other great Men or Families near them, some *Disobligation*, *Pique* or *Disgust* arising from them, will equally betray to a Dislike of, and Aversion to the Party and Opinions they support. And upon the whole (with respect to all or any of these) according to the Warmth of Mens natural Tempers, they will be more or less brought into violent Measures, contrary to that Peaceableness and Impartiality they ought to follow after.

(3.) A third great Instrument of Faction is *Credulity*: Many well-meaning Men, who have the Good of their Country and of the Church truly at their Hearts, are *deceived* into a Party, by those imaginary Dangers of the one or the other, which they are made to believe by the Insinuations of those whose Business it is to impose upon them; and the deeper their inward Concern is either for Church or State, the more easily they are alarm'd at the Suggestion of any Design against them, and more readily inflam'd against that Set of Men that is represented as the Enemies of them. And thus they are prevailed upon to go along with such as pretend to the same Concern that they have, in all the violent Steps which are thought fit to be taken, by being brought to believe that *all lies at Stake*, and that nothing less than crushing the other Side by a timely and vigorous Opposition can prevent the utter Destruction of either Religion or Liberty and Property amongst us. I do not say that these Suppositions are always wrong, or that

that the Case is never true in Fact, that wicked Designs are carried on by a Party to the apparent Hazard of those dear and valuable Enjoyments, Religion and Liberty. It certainly *has been* the Case, and *may be again*; and when it really is so, it is high time for a generous Zeal to exert it self; we should not deserve a Blessing which we will not vigorously defend. But my Meaning is, that we are too apt to be frighted when there is indeed *no occasion at all*; and this gives an Opportunity to intriguing Statesmen, and the Tools they employ, to amuse us with such Apprehensions as they know will work us to that Pitch for which they have Occasion. This Weakness of honest Minds, in giving Credit too hastily, to every thing which is told them, is of great Use to the Pamphleteers of the present Age, who stick at nothing right or wrong to serve the Cause they are paid for, and widen our Divisions; but palm upon the credulous part of the Nation, the most scurrilous Libels, and the most impudent Falshoods, for Truth. And if Men (who are otherwise good) will listen to their Stories, and believe whatever is thus put upon them, 'tis no wonder if their Zeal be sometimes warm'd to a degree not to be kept within the Rules of Peace and Charity. I shall Instance in but one more Obstruction of this Kind, and that is

(4.) The *Prevailing Affectation of Politicks* in all Sorts of Men, even those who are certainly the least qualified in their Understandings and Capacities for meddling with them. This is a great Grievance in a State; and as it has been once already, I pray God it may not again, some time or other, prove fatal to our Monarchy and Constitution: for nothing can be a more fruitful Seed-plot of Disturbance to the Government, or more naturally a Cause of frequent Changes and Convulsions in it, than this absurd pragmatistical Humour which obtains amongst us, when every private Person sets up for a Judge of what his Governours are doing, and what they ought to do. Would it not raise the Indignation of a wise Man, to hear the Honesty or Abilities of this or the other Minister, the Interest of the Kingdom, and all publick Management and Transactions, enquired into, talked over, and pronounced upon by every Body without Distinction, with as much Earnestness as at a Council Board, and as much Assurance as if they had been all their Lives Ambassadors Abroad or Secretaries of State at Home, and yet with as much Ignorance as one must expect from Men who have no Opportunities at all of knowing the Truth of things, and by the Privacy of their Education, no Capacity to form a Judgment in Matters of Civil Policy? These are things quite out of their way, and absolutely foreign to the Business which

which they have been brought up; and therefore though they may call it a *necessary Concern for the Publick*, and fancy it to be their *Duty* as well as *Right* to enquire into them, it is a great Mistake and of pernicious Consequence. 'Tis the Duty of those who are *entrusted* with the Administration to mind their Charge, and order all things for the publick Welfare; and it is as much the Duty of others to *study to be quiet, and to do their own Business*, as St. Paul directs them; *not to exercise themselves in great Matters, or in things too high for them*; but leave Affairs of State to those whose proper Function it is to manage them, and by their peaceable Modesty contribute what they can to render the Cares of those Great Men successful for the Good of their Country, who must otherwise be discouraged, weakened, and disappointed by the injudicious Censures and impertinent Meddlings of a Faction.

1 Thes 4. 11.

Psal. 131. 1.

Having thus represented to you the four Principal Obstructions to our *following after the Things which make for Peace*, you see how hard a Matter it is, where Parties and Divisions reign, to keep entirely unbiassed to the one or the other Side, or to keep from running into violent and unpeaceable Measures along with the Party, whichsoever it is to which we encline. You see what Diligence must be used with our own Minds to fix them in a cool and prudent Impartiality, while we must force our way to it, through the secret Whispers of *Self-Interest*, by which almost all Mankind is governed; the powerful *Prejudices of Education and Company*, which are apt insensibly to steal upon us; or of *Love and Hatred*, which occasionally blind our Judgments; and while we must keep Discretion always upon the stretch to guard against *Credulity*, the common Weakness of our Nature in Matters of this Kind; and deny our selves that popular and prevailing Vanity, the *Affecation of Politicks*, which every Body about us has taken up, and with which we hear even those People make a flourish, whom (without Presumption) we may judge to be less qualified for it than our selves. The bearing up against all these Temptations cannot but be very difficult. But consider that the Interest of the publick Peace, which it is our Duty to pursue, requires it; and it must be resolutely done, if we will indeed support the Temper and Character of Christians. And this brings me to my third general Head.

III. The Motives which recommend the Practice of this Duty of *following after the Things which make for Peace*. Much might be said upon so copious so necessary an Argument, but I shall confine my self to three or four, and leave them to your serious Consideration.

(1.) First

(1.) First then let us remember the great *Examples* proposed to us by our Religion, even *God the Father*, and our *Lord Jesus Christ*. God is the *God of Peace*, and Christ the *Prince of Peace*, and if we can follow better Patterns, let us chuse to our selves another Master and a new Religion; for as it is certainly the highest Perfection of a Creature to be conformed as near as Creatures can be to the Image of his Creator, as it is the Glory of a Pupil to imbibe the Virtues and Excellencies of his Tutor; the Christian is to make it his principal Concern and Study to resemble the God he serves and honours, and to take the Impressions of all manner of Goodness from Christ, the Divine Author of Christianity, and the great Instructor of Christians. And accordingly we find it often urged upon us in the New Testament, by our Saviour himself, as well as his Apostles, that we should thus imitate God and him. *Be ye perfect as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. Be ye merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful. Learn of me for I am meek and lowly. Love one another as I have loved you.* I could lay before you several other Instances of such an Imitation proposed to us in the Gospels; but I have chosen these, because they more particularly refer to that Virtue of Peaceableness (or the Foundations of it, Meekness, and universal Charity, and Affection) which my Text and present Discourse have recommended. *This Mind therefore must be in us which was also in Christ Jesus*; if we acknowledge him for our Lord and Master, we must follow his Steps who is the Lord of Peace; and if we challenge Almighty God for our Father, we must imitate him as becomes obedient Children in that excellent Disposition, for *God is not the Author of Confusion, but of Peace*. Since therefore it is so natural, as we observed before, to fall in with the Sentiments and Practice of some great Person of our Acquaintance for whom we have a more than ordinary Esteem and Veneration, let us give that Bias of our Natures the Religious Turn for which it was design'd; and as we all profess the highest Veneration for God and Christ, let us show that we are in earnest, by copying from their bright Example, and transcribing the sweet and peaceable Disposition of Heaven into our own.

(2.) Another Motive ought to be the particular Stress that is laid upon this Duty of Peaceableness throughout the whole New Testament, where nothing is more frequently inculcated, nor with greater Earnestness. The Angels at the Birth of our Saviour proclaim'd it as one of the special Blessings intended for Mankind, by that surprising Mystery and Miracle of Love his Incarnation, *On earth PEACE, good-will towards men.* The latter

Mat. 5. 48.

Luke 6. 36.

Matt. 11.

29.

Joh. 15. 12.

Luke 2. 14.

latter, indeed, implies the reconciled Affection of God to us through him; but the former shews what he expected and required as the Application we should make of this Mercy with regard to each other, entire Peace, and Friendship, and Affection amongst our selves, as St. John has drawn the Inference, *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* 1 Joh. 4. 11. Again, when the blessed Jesus was about to leave the World, in the last Conversation he had with his Disciples before he suffered, he very earnestly presses them to mutual Love and Peace, and makes it the distinguishing Character of Christians, *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one to another.* Joh. 13. 35. If the Divine Author of our Religion be of any Authority with us (and surely he should be so) we must, after such a Declaration from his own Mouth as this, conclude all factious Heats and Animosities to be utterly inconsistent with the true Spirit of Christianity. And as our Saviour taught, so his inspired Apostles wrote; St. Paul remarkably abounds with Exhortations to Peace, and Assertions of the Importance of it. *The kingdom of God, (says he) is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; for he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men.* So to the Galatians, he reckons up the Fruit of the Spirit, *Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance:* Almost all this copious variety of Words implying but that one Cardinal Virtue of Peaceableness and Good-nature. To the Colossians also he recommends it, that *above all things they should put on charity which is the bond of perfectness, and let the peace of God rule in their Hearts, to which they had been called in one Body.* So he exhorts the Corinthians, *Live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you;* and the Hebrews, *Follow peace with all men,* And so he prays for the Thessalonians, *The Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means.* St. James agrees with that Apostle, when inveighing against Parties and Contentions he tells us, that *the wisdom which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisie.* The whole first Epistle of St. John is of the same Strain, continually exhorting to Love and Charity, which are the Foundations of Peace. Add to all this, that in the Language of the New-Testament, Christians are very often called by the endearing Name of *Brethren*, which implies, that they of all People in the World should live together in the most tender Friendship and Affection. Now if the New-Testament (the Word of God delivered there) be indeed an au-
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thoritative Rule of Life, the indispensable Law and Model of a Christian's Conduct, and that by which he shall be judged hereafter (as certainly it is) why do these frequently repeated, plain, and positive Recommendations of Peaceableness, which run through every Part of it, make such faint Impressions upon us? Why do we not suit our Practice to the Rule? Why do we not pursue it as the proper Ornament and Perfection of Christians? For such we are told it is, and how can we ever think of appearing before Christ our Judge hereafter, if we make no Conscience of a Duty upon which he so much insists? But,

(3.) As a farther Motive, let us consider the *exceeding Mischiefs which attend upon Discord and Dissention*. The Devil (who is stiled in Holy Scripture the Destroyer) is always upon the stretch in his malicious Politicks to do what Mischiefe he can to Mankind in general, but more especially to the Church of God. And what Contrivance has the Invention of Hell found out more fatally successful than to divide the Members by intestine Factions, and to make them hate and destroy one another? 'Twas natural for him to make choice of this Method, he was himself a factious Rebel to his Creator, and he still delights in Discontent, and Mutiny, and Sedition. He propagates it in the World with all the Art he is Master of, as knowing that nothing will render us more unlike to God, nothing is more contrary to the gracious Designs of Heaven for our Comfort and Happiness, and nothing can produce a more fruitful Harvest of other Wickednesses than this uncharitable Spirit of Dissention. He knows it also to be the most effectual hindrance to all good Proposals, which might serve the Glory of God, and forward the growth of Virtue, or put a stop to the Impudence of Vice amongst us, as the Prejudices imbibed by one Man against another (be the Cause of it what it will) must not only keep them at a distance from consulting or acting together in any thing for the publick Good, but will raise mutual and unreasonable Jealousies betwixt them to such an height, that the one shall industriously decry and rail at, obstruct and oppose as much as in him lies, whatever his Adversary offers or pursues with such a View. I need not entertain you with Instances from ancient or from foreign History. Our own Nation and our own Times will furnish us with melancholy Thoughts enough upon this Subject. What have not our Divisions done to stifle the best Proposals for the Security, Honour and Advantage of Religion here? We complain (too justly) that Deism, Socinianism, Profaness, and Impiety gain ground upon us every Day; the most detestable

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Reflections upon our Saviour and his Doctrine, and those sacred Oracles which contain it, are made and publish'd with as bare-fac'd a Freedom, as if the Body of the Nation were either Jews or Heathens. Our Convocation seem'd to be deeply sensible of this: But what have they done by way of Remedy? *Divisions* amongst themselves disabled them, perplex'd the Design, embarrass'd and disturb'd the Prosecution of it; and thus that necessary Work, and our just Expectations, fell to nothing. Another great Mischief which accrues to Religion from our Divisions is, that our present Bishops (tho' truly venerable for their Wisdom and Learning and many excellent Qualities) are unfortunately divided too, as Parties go; and what is the Consequence of this, but that Episcopacy is wounded through their Sides, the Order is despised because the Men and their Sentiments are *by the one or the other of the Parties disliked*; 'tis thought a piece of meritorious Wit to insult them in ill-natur'd Libels; and a very easie thing for every little Scribler to attack them. Thus scandalously do even the Members of our own Church forget the Episcopal Character, and the Reverence and Respect they owe to it; and what can proceed from this Contempt poured out so liberally upon them by *both* Parties, but an equal Contempt of the Authority of future Bishops, and a general breaking through the Discipline and Establishment of the Church? I cannot but take Notice too, that the inferior Clergy being gone into the like Distinctions, it is a mighty Obstruction to all they can say, or do, to persuade Men to their Duty. Let them be ranked on which Side they will, let them but bear the Name of either Whig or Tory, High or Low, 'tis probable there are some (if not a great many) in their Parish of the other Party, who will despise their Persons, disregard their Sermons, and be prejudiced against the Reproofs or good Advice they give them, meerly upon this Account. By which means the solemn Ordinances of God are rendered ineffectual to their Salvation, Men abhor the Offerings of the Lord, and think they can never run far enough from Religion, because they dislike the Ministers of it: And indeed, (tho' this were otherwise) how could Religion thrive, and the Power and Practice of Godliness prevail, while it is choaked by the rank Weeds of Envy, Hatred and Animosity in the Breast? 'Tis hardly possible to make a Growth and Progress in any Grace whatever where Charity is at a stand, for the Spirit of God requires a meek, serene, and peaceable Mind to work upon. The gentle Whispers of Grace and Goodness are not to be heard in a Mind that is all stormy with Passions, or prepos-

Matt. 12.
25.

fessed by the tumultuous Projects of a Faction. And therefore it is that Peace is so often recommended to us in the New-Testament, because it must *prepare* and *meliorate* the Soil for all the other generous Productions of a Christian Life. We have consider'd the Mischiefs our Divisions do to the Church, let us consider a little what may be the probable Consequences of them to the *State* or *Civil Government*. And here, without pretending to be either a Prophet or a Politician, 'tis easie to foresee, that if they be not laid aside in time, they must end in the publick Ruin. *Every kingdom divided against it self is brought to desolation.* The Experience of all Ages, and the Fate of many Kingdoms, has confirmed this Truth, as we are abundantly assured from History: And therefore what can we expect with relation to our selves, but that the same Cause should produce the same Effect? Thus much is certain, that tho' Matters should never come to such a dreadful Extream, yet our Divisions must have a very ill Aspect upon the *Peace of the Kingdom*, which can never be content and easie under the Government while they continue: For which Side soever is in the Administration, the opposite Party will be always murmuring, always reflecting upon the Management of Affairs, always instilling Jealousies into the People, which in spite of all the real Security and Happiness they are in will keep them from *enjoying it*, from being *sensible* of it, and duly *thankful* for it. And if we also look into the State of private *Neighbourhoods*, we cannot but see how uneasie these Dissentions make them, what Enmities and Quarrels, Hatred and ill Offices betwixt Man and Man arise from them; what Railing and Slandering, what Prejudices and Opposition, what Coldness and Distaste betwixt the nearest Relations; what Strangeness betwixt such as once were the most intimate Acquaintance, what Ingratitude to the best Friends, all which must utterly destroy the Benefit of Society, and spoil the Comfort of our Lives. In general, we may see by common Observation what St. James has by Divine Authority forewarn'd us of, that *where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.* Let us now turn our Eyes to a more agreeable Prospect,

Jan. 3. 16.

(4.) *The great Advantages of Peace.* And here it were an easie thing for your own Application to prevent me, by forming only in your Minds an absolute Reverse of what has been represented under the foregoing Head. Ye have been told the Mischiefs of Division, and may readily collect from thence the Benefits of Peace. But that the Impression may yet be stronger upon your Thoughts, 'tis fit we should take

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take a more immediate View of them directly in themselves, and not by Reflection only from their Opposite. The personal and private Advantages of a peaceable Disposition are such as may very well recommend it to our Esteem and Practice. Is it not a very desirable thing to every wise Man to have the Love of his Neighbourhood, if he can have it upon honest Terms? Is it not a Pleasure to live in perfect Harmony and good Agreement with all about us? Is it not a Matter worthy of our Concern, to enjoy, by means of such an Harmony, the mutual good Offices we daily stand in need of from one another? All this is naturally the Consequence of a peaceable Temper. A Man who really endeavours to be of no Party, but with equal Candour grants the Failings, allows the Virtues, and gives a patient Ear to the Arguments on both Sides, tho' he comes up with neither in their Heat and Forwardness, is esteem'd by both for his good Nature. For the Case is the same with *Peaceableness*, as it is with Humility: A proud Man loves the humble, and even an angry Man the Peaceable, and both for the same Reasons, because he gives them no Opposition; and because Humility and Meekness are confessed by every Body to be valuable Characters when they appear in others, tho' their own Pride and Passions may overbear them as to their own Conduct. Again, is it not a very great inward Pleasure to a Man to have a Mind always serene and compos'd, entirely unconcern'd in the little Brigues of this or the other Party, so that the Elevation of the one or the Depression of the other never carries him out of himself; the Change of Ministries, and the good or ill Success of their self-Interested Projects, can neither raise his Spirits, nor deject them; but he is ever easie, calm and steady, and leaves the factious World to struggle it out amongst themselves? But above all, is it not a mighty Satisfaction to his Conscience, that amidst all the Broils of Parties, and the Rage and Animosity which inspire them, he has *discharged himself as becomes a Christian*, a Disciple of the meek and charitable Jesus, a Follower after the Things which make for Peace, and a Candidate for the Rewards of that better World, where Faction and Division cannot enter? Let us now look upon this peaceable Spirit as it affects the Publick. And that (1.) as it would make our Country to be *honour'd and fear'd abroad*, and (2.) render it (with the Blessing of divine Providence) *safe and flourishing at home*.

First, it would make us to be *honour'd and fear'd abroad*. There is no doubt but that *England* has, ever since the Reformation, been look'd upon as the Head of the Protestant Interest.

terest in *Europe*, and in its civil Character has always been esteemed a wealthy, valiant, powerful Nation. Let us consider therefore, that the Eyes of all our Neighbours, either as Friends or Enemies, are upon us. We cannot lose their Esteem, we cannot (humanely speaking) suffer by their Malice, if we but firmly united amongst our selves. We shall be revered by all about us, when those Divisions are laid, which make us now contemptible. Our Enemies know that we have *Power*, they look with envious Eyes upon our *Wealth*, and they cannot deny our *Valour*; but if we still continue thus fermenting and inflam'd within, they will continue their Hopes and Artifices to break that *Power*, and make our *Wealth* a Prey to them, and that *Valour* will be render'd useless, which should maintain the one, and defend the other. Whereas on the other hand, if we be entirely at Peace amongst our selves, what Nation will presume to injure or affront us, well knowing that when we act unanimously, we act with Vigour, and their Attempts are desperate. But,

Secondly, A Peace amongst our selves will, by the good Providence of God, be the best way to make us *safe and flourishing at Home*. If we but heartily and generally let fall our Party-Quarrels, and set our selves as one Man to support the ancient Constitution of our Country, the secret Enemies of it within our own Bowels (if any such there are) will have no room to stir, no Opportunity to fasten upon for their Designs. If universal Charity prevail, Religion and Virtue will prosper and get Ground along with it. Our Zeal (the natural Warmth of *English* Tempers) will be no longer misapply'd, to inflame and to distract us, but directed to those deserving Objects which may best promote our present good Order, and our future Happiness. The Envy and Jealousie of Parties no longer perplexing our Affairs, Trade will encrease, the Government be duly obey'd and honour'd, true Loyalty and Affection will make the Crown sit easie on that sacred Head, which is perpetually in Care to make us safe and prosperous. She has procur'd us Peace abroad, there is but one thing wanting to her Satisfaction, and that is, that we our selves should be in Peace at home. This she solicits, this she most earnestly recommends, for this her Royal Breast still labours, as knowing, that (notwithstanding all the glorious Things she has done for us) it is not in her Power to make us happy without our own Consent: And shall we not oblige her in this important Point, which she insists on so apparently for our Good? The Time may come, when (if we go on in that unpeaceable Spirit which now distracts us) the
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actual Mischiefs, and the dreadful Issue of our Divisions, may make us, with Sorrow, when too late, remember that once we had a Princess whose Wisdom foresaw what our imprudent Heats would end in, and whose affectionate Concern to prevent it gave us frequent Warning. Let us therefore every one of us, in Concert with her pious Care for our Security, make it our Business to unite together. And may she long survive our Animosities, and live to enjoy that perfect Friendship and Serenity in all her Subjects, with all the good Effects of it, which she has so much at Heart. Let us, upon all these Motives which have been urged, and especially in Obedience to the Laws of our Saviour, and Compliance with the Spirit of the Gospel, and according to the Apostle's Exhortation in my Text, make it truly (as we ought to do) a Point of Conscience, as well as a Means of Happiness, to *follow after the things which make for Peace.*

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